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ROME, OR REASON?

A REPLY TO CARDINAL MANNING.

Superstition "has ears more deaf than adds to the voice of any true decision."

PART I.

CARDINAL MANNING has stated the claims of the Roman Catholic Church with great clearness, and apparently without reserve. The age, position and learning of this man give a certain weight to his words, apart from their worth. He represents the oldest of the Christian churches. The questions involved are among the most important that can engage the human mind. No one having the slightest regard for that superb thing known as intellectual honesty, will avoid the issues tendered, or seek in any way to gain a victory over truth.

Without candor, discussion, in the highest sense, is impossible. All have the same interest, whether they know it or not, in the establishment of facts. All have the same to gain, the same to lose. He loads the dice against himself who scores a point against the right.

Absolute honesty is to the intellectual perception what light is to the eyes. Prejudice and passion cloud the mind. In each disputant should be blended the advocate and judge.

In this spirit, having in view only the ascertainment of the truth, let us examine the arguments, or rather the statements and conclusions, of Cardinal Manning.

The proposition is that "The Church itself, by its marvelous propagation, its eminent sanctity, its inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things, its catholic unity and invincible stability, is a vast and perpetual motive of credibility, and an irrefragable witness of its own divine legation."

The reasons given as supporting this proposition, are :

That the Catholic Church interpenetrates all the nations

of the civilized world ; that it is extranational and independent in a supernational unity ; that it is the same in every place ; that it speaks all languages in the civilized world ; that it is obedient to one head ; that as many as seven hundred bishops have knelt before the pope ; that pilgrims from all nations have brought gifts to Rome, and that all these things set forth in the most self-evident way the unity and universality of the Roman Church.

It is also asserted that “ men see the Head of the Church year by year speaking to the nations of the world, treating with Empires, Republics and Governments ; ” that “ there is no other man on earth that can so bear himself,” and that “ neither from Canterbury nor from Constantinople can such a voice go forth to which rulers and people listen.”

It is also claimed that the Catholic Church has enlightened and purified the world ; that it has given us the peace and purity of domestic life ; that it has destroyed idolatry and demonology ; that it gave us a body of law from a higher source than man ; that it has produced the civilization of Christendom ; that the popes were the greatest of statesmen and rulers ; that celibacy is better than marriage, and that the revolutions and reformations of the last three hundred years have been destructive and calamitous.

We will examine these assertions as well as some others.

No one will dispute that the Catholic Church is the best witness of its own existence. The same is true of every thing that exists—of every church, great and small, of every man, and of every insect.

But it is contended that the marvelous growth or propagation of the Church is evidence of its divine origin. Can it be said that success is supernatural ? All success in this world is relative. Majorities are not necessarily right. If anything is known—if anything can be known—we are sure that very large bodies of men have frequently been wrong. We believe in what is called the progress of mankind. Progress, for the most part, consists in finding new truths and getting rid of old errors—that is to say, getting nearer and nearer in harmony with the facts of nature, seeing with greater clearness the conditions of well-being.

There is no nation in which a majority leads the way. In the progress of mankind, the few have been the nearest right. There have been centuries in which the light seemed to emanate only from a handful of men, while the rest of the world was enveloped

in darkness. Some great man leads the way—he becomes the morning star, the prophet of a coming day. Afterwards, many millions accept his views. But there are still heights above and beyond; there are other pioneers, and the old day, in comparison with the new, becomes a night. So, we cannot say that success demonstrates either divine origin or supernatural aid.

We know, if we know anything, that wisdom has often been trampled beneath the feet of the multitude. We know that the torch of science has been blown out by the breath of the hydra-headed. We know that the whole intellectual heaven has been darkened again and again. The truth or falsity of a proposition cannot be determined by ascertaining the number of those who assert, or of those who deny.

If the marvelous propagation of the Catholic Church proves its divine origin, what shall we say of the marvelous propagation of Mohammedanism?

Nothing can be clearer than that Christianity arose out of the ruins of the Roman Empire—that is to say, the ruins of Paganism. And it is equally clear that Mohammedanism arose out of the wreck and ruin of Catholicism.

After Mohammed came upon the stage, “Christianity was forever expelled from its most glorious seats—from Palestine, the scene of its most sacred recollections; from Asia Minor, that of its first churches; from Egypt, whence issued the great doctrine of Trinitarian Orthodoxy, and from Carthage, who imposed her belief on Europe.” Before that time “the ecclesiastical chiefs of Rome, of Constantinople, and of Alexandria were engaged in a desperate struggle for supremacy, carrying out their purposes by weapons and in ways revolting to the conscience of man. Bishops were concerned in assassinations, poisonings, adulteries, blindings, riots, treasons, civil war. Patriarchs and primates were excommunicating and anathematizing one another in their rivalries for earthly power—bribing eunuchs with gold and courtesans and royal females with concessions of episcopal love. Among legions of monks who carried terror into the imperial armies and riot into the great cities arose hideous clamors for theological dogmas, but never a voice for intellectual liberty or the outraged rights of man.

“Under these circumstances, amid these atrocities and crimes, Mohammed arose, and raised his own nation from Fetichism, the

adoration of the meteoric stone, and from the basest idol worship, and irrevocably wrenched from Christianity more than half—and that by far the best half—of her possessions, since it included the Holy Land, the birth-place of the Christian faith, and Africa, which had imparted to it its Latin form ; and now, after a lapse of more than a thousand years that continent, and a very large part of Asia, remain permanently attached to the Arabian doctrine.”

It may be interesting in this connection to say that the Mohammedan now proves the divine mission of his Apostle by appealing to the marvelous propagation of the faith. If the argument is good in the mouth of a Catholic, is it not good in the mouth of a Moslem ? Let us see if it is not better.

According to Cardinal Manning, the Catholic Church triumphed only over the institutions of men—triumphed only over religions that had been established by men,—by wicked and ignorant men. But Mohammed triumphed not only over the religions of men, but over the religion of God. This ignorant driver of camels, this poor, unknown, unlettered boy, unassisted by God, unenlightened by supernatural means, drove the armies of the true cross before him as the winter's storm drives withered leaves. At his name, priests, bishops and cardinals fled with white faces—popes trembled, and the armies of God, fighting for the true faith, were conquered on a thousand fields.

If the success of a church proves its divinity, and after that another church arises and defeats the first, what does that prove ?

Let us put this question in a milder form : Suppose the second church lives and flourishes in spite of the first, what does that prove ?

As a matter of fact, however, no church rises with everything against it. Something is favorable to it, or it could not exist. If it succeeds and grows, it is absolutely certain that the conditions are favorable. If it spreads rapidly, it simply shows that the conditions are exceedingly favorable, and that the forces in opposition are weak and easily overcome.

Here, in my own country, within a few years, has arisen a new religion. Its foundations were laid in an intelligent community, having had the advantages of what is known as modern civilization. Yet this new faith—founded on the grossest absurd-

ities, as gross as we find in the Scriptures—in spite of all opposition began to grow, and kept growing. It was subjected to persecution, and the persecution increased its strength. It was driven from State to State by the believers in universal love, until it left what was called civilization, crossed the wide plains, and took up its abode on the shores of the Great Salt Lake. It continued to grow. Its founder, as he declared, had frequent conversations with God, and received directions from that source. Hundreds of miracles were performed—multitudes upon the desert were miraculously fed—the sick were cured—the dead were raised, and the Mormon Church continued to grow, until now, less than half a century after the death of its founder, there are several hundred thousand believers in the new faith.

Do you think that men enough could join this church to prove the truth of its creed?

Joseph Smith said that he found certain golden plates that had been buried for many generations, and upon these plates, in some unknown language, had been engraved this new revelation, and I think he insisted that by the use of miraculous mirrors this language was translated. If there should be Mormon bishops in all the countries of the world, eighteen hundred years from now, do you think a cardinal of that faith could prove the truth of the golden plates simply by the fact that the faith had spread and that seven hundred bishops had knelt before the head of that church?

It seems to me that a “supernatural” religion—that is to say, a religion that is claimed to have been divinely founded and to be authenticated by miracle, is much easier to establish among an ignorant people than any other—and the more ignorant the people, the easier such a religion could be established. The reason for this is plain. All ignorant tribes, all savage men, believe in the miraculous, in the supernatural. The conception of uniformity, of what may be called the eternal consistency of nature, is an idea far above their comprehension. They are forced to think in accordance with their minds, and as a consequence they account for all phenomena by the acts of superior beings—that is to say, by the supernatural. In other words, that religion having most in common with the savage, having most that was satisfactory to his mind, or to his lack of mind, would stand the best chance of success.

It is probably safe to say that at one time, or during one phase

of the development of man, everything was miraculous. After a time, the mind slowly developing, certain phenomena, always happening under like conditions, were called "natural," and none suspected any special interference. The domain of the miraculous grew less and less—the domain of the natural larger; that is to say, the common became the natural, but the uncommon was still regarded as the miraculous. The rising and setting of the sun ceased to excite the wonder of mankind—there was no miracle about that; but an eclipse of the sun was miraculous. Men did not then know that eclipses are periodical, that they happen with the same certainty that the sun rises. It took many observations through many generations to arrive at this conclusion. Ordinary rains became "natural," floods remained "miraculous."

But it can all be summed up in this: The average man regards the common as natural, the uncommon as supernatural. The educated man—and by that I mean the developed man—is satisfied that all phenomena are natural, and that the supernatural does not and can not exist.

As a rule, an individual is egotistic in the proportion that he lacks intelligence. The same is true of nations and races. The barbarian is egotistic enough to suppose that an Infinite Being is constantly doing something, or failing to do something, on his account. But as man rises in the scale of civilization, as he becomes really great, he comes to the conclusion that nothing in Nature happens on his account—that he is hardly great enough to disturb the motions of the planets.

Let us make an application of this: To me, the success of Mormonism is no evidence of its truth, because it has succeeded only with the superstitious. It has been recruited from communities brutalized by other forms of superstition. To me, the success of Mohammed does not tend to show that he was right—for the reason that he triumphed only over the ignorant, over the superstitious. The same is true of the Catholic Church. Its seeds were planted in darkness. It was accepted by the credulous, by men incapable of reasoning upon such questions. It did not, it has not, it can not triumph over the intellectual world. To count its many millions does not tend to prove the truth of its creed. On the contrary, a creed that delights the credulous gives evidence against itself.

Questions of fact or philosophy cannot be settled simply by numbers. There was a time when the Copernican system of astronomy had but few supporters—the multitude being on the other side. There was a time when the rotation of the earth was not believed by the majority.

Let us press this idea further. There was a time when Christianity was not in the majority, anywhere. Let us suppose that the first Christian missionary had met a prelate of the Pagan faith, and suppose this prelate had used against the Christian missionary the Cardinal's argument—how could the missionary have answered if the Cardinal's argument is good ?

But, after all, is the success of the Catholic Church a marvel? If this Church is of divine origin, if it has been under the especial care, protection and guidance of an Infinite Being, is not its failure far more wonderful than its success? For eighteen centuries it has persecuted and preached, and the salvation of the world is still remote. This is the result, and it may be asked whether it is worth while to try to convert the world to Catholicism.

Are Catholics better than Protestants? Are they nearer honest, nearer just, more charitable? Are Catholic nations better than Protestant? Do the Catholic nations move in the van of progress? Within their jurisdiction are life, liberty and property safer than anywhere else? Is Spain the first nation of the world ?

Let me ask another question : Are Catholics or Protestants better than Freethinkers ? Has the Catholic Church produced a greater man than Humboldt ? Has the Protestant produced a greater than Darwin ? Was not Emerson, so far as purity of life is concerned, the equal of any true believer ? Was Pius IX., or any other Vicar of Christ, superior to Abraham Lincoln ?

But it is claimed that the Catholic Church is universal, and that its universality demonstrates its divine origin.

According to the bible, the Apostles were ordered to go into all the world and preach the gospel—yet not one of them, nor one of their converts at any time, nor one of the Vicars of God, for fifteen hundred years afterward, knew of the existence of the Western Hemisphere. During all that time, can it be said that the Catholic Church was universal ? At the close of the fifteenth century, there was one-half of the world in which the Catholic faith had never been preached, and in the

other half not one person in ten had ever heard of it, and of those who had heard of it, not one in ten believed it. Certainly the Catholic Church was not then universal.

Is it universal now? What impression has Catholicism made upon the many millions of China, of Japan, of India, of Africa? Can it truthfully be said that the Catholic Church is now universal? When any church becomes universal, it will be the only church. There cannot be two universal churches, neither can there be one universal church and any other.

The Cardinal next tries to prove that the Catholic Church is divine, "by its eminent sanctity and its inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things."

And here let me admit that there are many millions of good Catholics—that is, of good men and women who are Catholics. It is unnecessary to charge universal dishonesty or hypocrisy, for the reason that this would be only a kind of personality. Many thousands of heroes have died in defense of the faith, and millions of Catholics have killed and been killed for the sake of their religion.

And here it may be well enough to say that martyrdom does not even tend to prove the truth of a religion. The man who dies in flames, standing by what he believes to be true, establishes, not the truth of what he believes, but his sincerity.

Without calling in question the intentions of the Catholic Church, we can ascertain whether it has been "inexhaustibly fruitful in all good things," and whether it has been "eminent for its sanctity."

In the first place, nothing can be better than goodness. Nothing is more sacred, or can be more sacred, than the well-being of man. All things that tend to increase or preserve the happiness of the human race are good—that is to say, they are sacred. All things that tend to the destruction of man's well-being, that tend to his unhappiness, are bad, no matter by whom they are taught or done.

It is perfectly certain that the Catholic Church has taught, and still teaches, that intellectual liberty is dangerous—that it should not be allowed. It was driven to take this position because it had taken another. It taught, and still teaches, that a certain belief is necessary to salvation. It has always known that investigation and inquiry led, or might lead, to doubt; that doubt leads,

or may lead, to heresy, and that heresy leads to hell. In other words, the Catholic Church has something more important than this world, more important than the well-being of man here. It regards this life as an opportunity for joining that Church, for accepting that creed, and for the saving of your soul.

If the Catholic Church is right in its premises, it is right in its conclusion. If it is necessary to believe the Catholic creed in order to obtain eternal joy, then, of course, nothing else in this world is, comparatively speaking, of the slightest importance. Consequently, the Catholic Church has been, and still is, the enemy of intellectual freedom, of investigation, of inquiry—in other words, the enemy of progress in secular things.

The result of this was an effort to compel all men to accept the belief necessary to salvation. This effort naturally divided itself into persuasion and persecution.

It will be admitted that the good man is kind, merciful, charitable, forgiving and just. A church must be judged by the same standard. Has the Church been merciful? Has it been “fruitful in the good things” of justice, charity and forgiveness? Can a good man, believing a good doctrine, persecute for opinion’s sake? If the Church imprisons a man for the expression of an honest opinion, is it not certain, either that the doctrine of the Church is wrong, or that the Church is bad? Both cannot be good. “Sanctity” without goodness is impossible. Thousands of “saints” have been the most malicious of the human race. If the history of the world proves anything, it proves that the Catholic Church was for many centuries the most merciless institution that ever existed among men. I cannot believe that the instruments of persecution were made and used by the eminently good; neither can I believe that honest people were imprisoned, tortured, and burned at the stake by a Church that was “inexhaustibly fruitful in all good things.”

And let me say here that I have no Protestant prejudices against Catholicism, and have no Catholic prejudices against Protestantism. I regard all religions either without prejudice or with the same prejudice. They were all, according to my belief, devised by men, and all have for a foundation ignorance of this world and fear of the next. All the Gods have been made by men. They are all equally powerful and equally useless. I like some of them better than I do others,

for the same reason that I admire some characters in fiction more than I do others. I prefer Miranda to Caliban, but have not the slightest idea that either of them existed. So I prefer Jupiter to Jehovah, although perfectly satisfied that both are myths. I believe myself to be in a frame of mind to justly and fairly consider the claims of different religions, believing as I do that all are wrong, and admitting as I do that there is some good in all.

When one speaks of the "inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things" of the Catholic Church, we remember the horrors and atrocities of the Inquisition—the rewards offered by the Roman Church for the capture and murder of honest men. We remember the Dominican Order, the members of which, upheld by the Vicar of Christ, pursued the heretics like sleuth hounds, through many centuries.

The Church, "inexhaustible in fruitfulness in all good things," not only imprisoned and branded and burned the living, but violated the dead. It robbed graves, to the end that it might convict corpses of heresy—to the end that it might take from widows their portions and from orphans their patrimony.

We remember the millions in the darkness of dungeons—the millions who perished by the sword—the vast multitudes destroyed in flames—those who were flayed alive—those who were blinded—those whose tongues were cut out—those into whose ears were poured molten lead—those whose eyes were deprived of their lids—those who were tortured and tormented in every way by which pain could be inflicted and human nature overcome.

And we remember, too, the exultant cry of the Church over the bodies of her victims: "Their bodies were burned here, but their souls are now tortured in hell."

We remember that the Church, by treachery, bribery, perjury, and the commission of every possible crime, got possession and control of Christendom, and we know the use that was made of this power—that it was used to brutalize, degrade, stupefy, and "sanctify" the children of men. We know also that the Vicars of Christ were persecutors for opinion's sake—that they sought to destroy the liberty of thought through fear—that they endeavored to make every brain a Bastille in which the mind should be a convict—that they endeavored to make every tongue a prisoner, watched by a familiar of the Inquisition

—and that they threatened punishment here, imprisonment here, burnings here, and, in the name of their God, eternal imprisonment and eternal burnings hereafter.

We know, too, that the Catholic Church was, during all the years of its power, the enemy of every science. It preferred magic to medicine, relics to remedies, priests to physicians. It thought more of astrologers than of astronomers. It hated geologists—it persecuted the chemist, and imprisoned the naturalist, and opposed every discovery calculated to improve the condition of mankind.

It is impossible to forget the persecutions of the Cathari, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Hussites, the Huguenots, and of every sect that had the courage to think just a little for itself. Think of a woman—the mother of a family—taken from her children and burned, on account of her view as to the three natures of Jesus Christ. Think of the Catholic Church,—an institution with a Divine Founder, presided over by the agent of God—punishing a woman for giving a cup of cold water to a fellow being who had been anathematized. Think of this Church, “fruitful in all good things,” launching its curse at an honest man—not only cursing him from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet with a fiendish particularity, but having at the same time the impudence to call on God, and the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ, and the Virgin Mary, to join in the curse; and to curse him not only here, but forever hereafter—calling upon all the saints and upon all the redeemed to join in a hallelujah of curses, so that earth and heaven should reverberate with countless curses launched at a human being simply for having expressed an honest thought.

This Church, so “fruitful in all good things,” invented crimes that it might punish. This Church tried men for a “suspicion of heresy”—imprisoned them for the vice of being suspected—stripped them of all they had on earth and allowed them to rot in dungeons, because they were guilty of the crime of having been suspected. This was a part of the Canon Law.

It is too late to talk about the “invincible stability” of the Catholic Church.

It was not invincible in the Seventh, in the Eighth, or in the Ninth centuries. It was not invincible in Germany in Luther’s day. It was not invincible in the Low Countries. It was not

invincible in Scotland, or in England. It was not invincible in France. It is not invincible in Italy. It is not supreme in any intellectual centre of the world. It does not triumph in Paris, or Berlin ; it is not dominant in London, in England ; neither is it triumphant in the United States. It has not within its fold the philosophers, the statesmen, and the thinkers, who are the leaders of the human race.

It is claimed that Catholicism "interpenetrates all the nations of the civilized world," and that "in some it holds the whole nation in its unity."

I suppose the Catholic Church is more powerful in Spain than in any other nation. The history of this nation demonstrates the result of Catholic supremacy, the result of an acknowledgment by a people that a certain religion is too sacred to be examined.

Without attempting in an article of this character to point out the many causes that contributed to the adoption of Catholicism by the Spanish people, it is enough to say that Spain, of all nations, has been and is the most thoroughly Catholic, and the most thoroughly interpenetrated and dominated by the spirit of the Church of Rome.

Spain used the sword of the Church. In the name of religion it endeavored to conquer the Infidel world. It drove from its territory the Moors, not because they were bad, not because they were idle and dishonest, but because they were Infidels. It expelled the Jews, not because they were ignorant or vicious, but because they were unbelievers. It drove out the Moriscoes, and deliberately made outcasts of the intelligent, the industrious, the honest and the useful, because they were not Catholics. It leaped like a wild beast upon the Low Countries, for the destruction of Protestantism. It covered the seas with its fleets, to destroy the intellectual liberty of man. And not only so—it established the Inquisition within its borders. It imprisoned the honest, it burned the noble, and succeeded after many years of devotion to the true faith, in destroying the industry, the intelligence, the usefulness, the genius, the nobility and the wealth of a nation. It became a wreck, a jest of the conquered, and excited the pity of its former victims.

In this period of degradation, the Catholic Church held "the whole nation in its unity."

At last Spain began to deviate from the path of the Church.

It made a treaty with an Infidel power. In 1782 it became humble enough, and wise enough, to be friends with Turkey. It made treaties with Tripoli and Algiers and the Barbary States. It had become too poor to ransom the prisoners taken by these powers. It began to appreciate the fact that it could neither conquer nor convert the world by the sword.

Spain has progressed in the arts and sciences, in all that tends to enrich and ennoble a nation, in the precise proportion that she has lost faith in the Catholic Church. This may be said of every other nation in Christendom. Torquemada is dead; Castelar is alive. The dungeons of the Inquisition are empty, and a little light has penetrated the clouds and mists—not much, but a little. Spain is not yet clothed and in her right mind. A few years ago the cholera visited Madrid and other cities. Physicians were mobbed. Processions of saints carried the host through the streets for the purpose of staying the plague. The streets were not cleaned; the sewers were filled. Filth and faith, old partners, reigned supreme. The Church, “*eminent for its sanctity*,” stood in the light and cast its shadow on the ignorant and the prostrate. The Church, in its “*inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things*,” allowed its children to perish through ignorance, and used the diseases it had produced as an instrumentality to further enslave its votaries and its victims.

No one will deny that many of its priests exhibited heroism of the highest order in visiting the sick and administering what are called the consolations of religion to the dying, and in burying the dead. It is necessary neither to deny nor disparage the self-denial and goodness of these men. But their religion did more than all other causes to produce the very evils that called for the exhibition of self-denial and heroism. One scientist in control of Madrid could have prevented the plague. In such cases, cleanliness is far better than “*godliness* ;” science is superior to superstition; drainage much better than divinity; therapeutics more excellent than theology. Goodness is not enough—intelligence is necessary. Faith is not sufficient, creeds are helpless, and prayers fruitless.

It is admitted that the Catholic Church exists in many nations; that it is dominated, at least in a great degree, by the Bishop of Rome—that it is international in that sense, and that in that sense it has what may be called a “*supernational unity*.” The same,

however, is true of the Masonic fraternity. It exists in many nations, but it is not a national body. It is in the same sense extranational, in the same sense international, and has in the same sense a supernational unity. So the same may be said of other societies. This, however, does not tend to prove that anything supernational is supernatural.

It is also admitted that in faith, worship, ceremonial, discipline and government, the Catholic Church is substantially the same wherever it exists. This establishes the unity, but not the divinity, of the institution.

The church that does not allow investigation, that teaches that all doubts are wicked, attains unity through tyranny, that is, monotony by repression. Wherever man has had something like freedom, differences have appeared, heresies have taken root, and the divisions have become permanent—new sects have been born and the Catholic Church has been weakened. The boast of unity is the confession of tyranny.

It is insisted that the unity of the Church substantiates its claim to divine origin. This is asserted over and over again, in many ways; and yet in the Cardinal's article is found this strange mingling of boast and confession: "Was it only by the human power of man that the unity, external and internal, which for fourteen hundred years had been supreme, was once more restored in the Council of Constance, never to be broken again?"

By this it is admitted that the internal and external unity of the Catholic Church has been broken, and that it required more than human power to restore it. Then the boast is made that it will never be broken again. Yet it is asserted that the internal and external unity of the Catholic Church is the great fact that demonstrates its divine origin.

Now if this internal and external unity was broken, and remained broken for years, there was an interval during which the Church had no internal or external unity, and during which the evidence of divine origin failed. The unity was broken in spite of the Divine Founder. This is admitted by the use of the word "again." The unbroken unity of the Church is asserted, and upon this assertion is based the claim of divine origin; it is then admitted that the unity was broken. The argument is then shifted, and the claim is made that it required more than human power to restore the internal and external unity of the Church,

and that the restoration, not the unity, is proof of the divine origin. Is there any contradiction beyond this?

Let us state the case in another way. Let us suppose that a man has a sword which he claims was made by God, stating that the reason he knows that God made the sword is that it never had been and never could be broken. Now if it was afterwards ascertained that it had been broken, and the owner admitted that it had been, what would be thought of him if he then took the ground that it had been welded, and that the welding was the evidence that it was of divine origin?

A prophecy is then indulged in, to the effect that the internal and external unity of the Church can never be broken again. It is admitted that it was broken—it is asserted that it was divinely restored—and then it is declared that it is never to be broken again. No reason is given for this prophecy; it must be born of the facts already stated. Put in a form to be easily understood, it is this:

We know that the unity of the Church can never be broken, because the Church is of divine origin.

We know that it was broken; but this does not weaken the argument, because it was restored by God, and it has not been broken since.

Therefore, it never can be broken again.

It is stated that the Catholic Church is immutable, and that its immutability establishes its claim to divine origin. Was it immutable when its unity, internal and external, was broken? Was it precisely the same after its unity was broken that it was before? Was it precisely the same after its unity was divinely restored that it was while broken? Was it universal while it was without unity? Which of the fragments was universal—which was immutable?

The fact that the Catholic Church is obedient to the pope, establishes, not the supernatural origin of the Church, but the mental slavery of its members. It establishes the fact that it is a successful organization; that it is cunningly devised; that it destroys the mental independence, and that whoever absolutely submits to its authority loses the jewel of his soul.

The fact that Catholics are to a great extent obedient to the pope, establishes nothing except the thoroughness of the organization.

How was the Roman empire formed? By what means did that Great Power hold in bondage the then known world? How is it that a despotism is established? How is it that the few enslave the many? How is it that the nobility live on the labor of peasants? The answer is in one word, Organization. The organized few triumph over the unorganized many. The few hold the sword and the purse. The unorganized are overcome in detail—terrorized, brutalized, robbed, conquered.

We must remember that when Christianity was established the world was ignorant, credulous and cruel. The gospel with its idea of forgiveness—with its heaven and hell—was suited to the barbarians among whom it was preached. Let it be understood, once for all, that Christ had but little to do with Christianity. The people became convinced—being ignorant, stupid and credulous—that the Church held the keys of heaven and hell. The foundation for the most terrible mental tyranny that has existed among men was in this way laid. The Catholic Church enslaved to the extent of its power. It resorted to every possible form of fraud; it perverted every good instinct of the human heart; it rewarded every vice; it resorted to every artifice that ingenuity could devise, to reach the highest round of power. It tortured the accused to make them confess; it tortured witnesses to compel the commission of perjury; it tortured children for the purpose of making them convict their parents; it compelled men to establish their own innocence; it imprisoned without limit; it had the malicious patience to wait; it left the accused without trial, and left them in dungeons until released by death. There is no crime that the Catholic Church did not commit,—no cruelty that it did not practice,—no form of treachery that it did not reward, and no virtue that it did not persecute. It was the greatest and most powerful enemy of human rights. It did all that organization, cunning, piety, self-denial, heroism, treachery, zeal and brute force could do to enslave the children of men. It was the enemy of intelligence, the assassin of liberty, and the destroyer of progress. It loaded the noble with chains and the infamous with honors. In one hand it carried the alms dish, in the other a dagger. It argued with the sword, persuaded with poison, and convinced with the fagot.

It is impossible to see how the divine origin of a Church can be established by showing that hundreds of bishops have visited the pope.

Does the fact that millions of the faithful visit Mecca establish the truth of the Koran? Is it a scene for congratulation when the bishops of thirty nations kneel before a man? Is it not humiliating to know that man is willing to kneel at the feet of man? Could a noble man demand, or joyfully receive, the humiliation of his fellows?

As a rule, arrogance and humility go together. He who in power compels his fellow man to kneel, will himself kneel when weak. The tyrant is a cringer in power; a cringer is a tyrant out of power. Great men stand face to face. They meet on equal terms. The cardinal who kneels in the presence of the pope, wants the bishop to kneel in his presence; and the bishop who kneels demands that the priest shall kneel to him; and the priest who kneels demands that they in lower orders shall kneel; and all, from pope to the lowest—that is to say, from pope to exorcist, from pope to the one in charge of the bones of saints—all demand that the people, the laymen, those upon whom they live, shall kneel to them.

The man of free and noble spirit will not kneel. Courage has no knees. Fear kneels, or falls upon its ashen face.

The Cardinal insists that the pope is the Vicar of Christ, and that all popes have been. What is a Vicar of Jesus Christ? He is a substitute in office. He stands in the place, or occupies the position in relation to the Church, in relation to the world, that Jesus Christ would occupy were he the pope at Rome. In other words, he takes Christ's place; so that, according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, Jesus Christ himself is present in the person of the pope.

We all know that a good man may employ a bad agent. A good king might leave his realm and put in his place a tyrant and a wretch. The good man, and the good king, cannot certainly know what manner of man the agent is—what kind of person the vicar is—consequently the bad may be chosen. But if the king appointed a bad vicar, knowing him to be bad, knowing that he would oppress the people, knowing that he would imprison and burn the noble and generous, what excuse can be imagined for such a king?

Now if the Church is of divine origin, and if each pope is the Vicar of Jesus Christ, he must have been chosen by Jesus Christ; and when he was chosen, Christ must have known exactly what

his vicar would do. Can we believe that an infinitely wise and good Being would choose immoral, dishonest, ignorant, malicious, heartless, fiendish, and inhuman vicars ?

The Cardinal admits that "the history of Christianity is the history of the Church, and that the history of the Church is the history of the Pontiffs," and he then declares that "the greatest statesmen and rulers that the world has ever seen are the Popes of Rome."

Let me call attention to a few passages in Draper's "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe."

"Constantine was one of the Vicars of Christ. Afterwards, Stephen IV. was chosen. The eyes of Constantine were then put out by Stephen, acting in Christ's place. The tongue of the Bishop Theodorus was amputated by the man who had been substituted for God. This bishop was left in a dungeon to perish of thirst. Pope Leo III. was seized in the street and forced into a church, where the nephews of Pope Adrian attempted to put out his eyes and cut off his tongue. His successor, Stephen V., was driven ignominiously from Rome. His successor, Paschal I., was accused of blinding and murdering two ecclesiastics in the Lateran Palace. John VIII., unable to resist the Mohammedans, was compelled to pay them tribute.

"At this time, the Bishop of Naples was in secret alliance with the Mohammedans, and they divided with this Catholic bishop the plunder they collected from other Catholics. This bishop was excommunicated by the pope; afterwards he gave him absolution because he betrayed the chief Mohammedans, and assassinated others. There was an ecclesiastical conspiracy to murder the pope, and some of the treasures of the Church were seized, and the gate of St. Pancrazia was opened with false keys to admit the Saracens. Formosus, who had been engaged in these transactions, who had been excommunicated as a conspirator for the murder of Pope John, was himself elected pope in 891. Boniface VI. was his successor. He had been deposed from the diaconate and from the priesthood for his immoral and lewd life. Stephen VII. was the next pope, and he had the dead body of Formosus taken from the grave, clothed in papal habiliments, propped up in a chair and tried before a Council. The corpse was found guilty, three fingers were cut off and the body cast into the Tiber. Afterwards Stephen VII., this Vicar of Christ, was thrown into prison and strangled.

“From 896 to 900, five popes were consecrated. Leo V., in less than two months after he became pope, was cast into prison by Christopher, one of his chaplains. This Christopher usurped his place, and in a little while was expelled from Rome by Sergius III., who became pope in 905. This pope lived in criminal intercourse with the celebrated Theodora, who with her daughters Marozia and Theodora, both prostitutes, exercised an extraordinary control over him. The love of Theodora was also shared by John X. She gave him the Archbishopric of Ravenna, and made him pope in 915. The daughter of Theodora overthrew this pope. She surprised him in the Lateran Palace. His brother, Peter, was killed; the pope was thrown into prison, where he was afterward murdered. Afterward, this Marozia, daughter of Theodora, made her own son pope, John XI. Many affirmed that Pope Sergius was his father, but his mother inclined to attribute him to her husband Alberic, whose brother Guido she afterward married. Another of her sons, Alberic, jealous of his brother John, the pope, cast him and their mother into prison. Alberic’s son was then elected pope as John XII.

“John was nineteen years old when he became the Vicar of Christ. His reign was characterized by the most shocking immoralities, so that the Emperor Otho I. was compelled by the German clergy to interfere. He was tried. It appeared that John had received bribes for the consecration of bishops; that he had ordained one who was only ten years old; that he was charged with incest, and with so many adulteries that the Lateran Palace had become a brothel. He put out the eyes of one ecclesiastic; he maimed another—both dying in consequence of their injuries. He was given to drunkenness and to gambling. He was deposed at last, and Leo VII. elected in his stead. Subsequently he got the upper hand. He seized his antagonists; he cut off the hand of one, the nose, the finger, and the tongue of others. His life was eventually brought to an end by the vengeance of a man whose wife he had seduced.”

And yet, I admit that the most infamous popes, the most heartless and fiendish bishops, friars, and priests were models of mercy, charity, and justice when compared with the orthodox God—with the God they worshiped. These popes, these bishops, these priests could persecute only for a few years—they could burn only for a few moments—but their God threatened to imprison

and burn forever; and their God is as much worse than they were, as hell is worse than the Inquisition.

“John XIII. was strangled in prison. Boniface VII. imprisoned Benedict VII., and starved him to death. John XIV. was secretly put to death in the dungeons of the castle of St. Angelo. The corpse of Boniface was dragged by the populace through the streets.”

It must be remembered that the popes were assassinated by Catholics—murdered by the faithful—that one Vicar of Christ strangled another Vicar of Christ, and that these men were “the greatest rulers and the greatest statesmen of the earth.”

“Pope John XVI. was seized, his eyes put out, his nose cut off, his tongue torn from his mouth, and he was sent through the streets mounted on an ass, with his face to the tail. Benedict IX., a boy of less than twelve years of age, was raised to the apostolic throne. One of his successors, Victor III., declared that the life of Benedict was so shameful, so foul, so execrable, that he shuddered to describe it. He ruled like a captain of banditti. The people, unable to bear longer his adulteries, his homicides and his abominations, rose against him, and in despair of maintaining his position, he put up the papacy to auction, and it was bought by a Presbyter named John, who became Gregory VI., in the year of grace 1045. Well may we ask, Were these the Vicegerents of God upon earth—these, who had truly reached that goal beyond which the last effort of human wickedness cannot pass?”

It may be sufficient to say that there is no crime that man can commit that has not been committed by the Vicars of Christ. They have inflicted every possible torture, violated every natural right. Greater monsters the human race has not produced.

Among the “some two hundred and fifty-eight” Vicars of Christ there were probably some good men. This would have happened even if the intention had been to get all bad men, for the reason that man reaches perfection neither in good nor in evil; but if they were selected by Christ himself, if they were selected by a Church with a divine origin and under divine guidance, then there is no way to account for the selection of a bad one. If one hypocrite was duly elected pope—one murderer, one strangler, one starver—this demonstrates that all the popes were selected by men, and by men only, and that the claim of divine guidance is born of zeal and uttered without knowledge.

But who were the Vicars of Christ? How many have there been? Cardinal Manning himself does not know. He is not sure. He says: "Starting from St. Peter to Leo XIII., there have been *some* two hundred and fifty-eight Pontiffs claiming to be recognized by the whole Catholic unity as successors of St. Peter and Vicars of Jesus Christ." Why did he use the word "some"? Why "claiming"? Does he not positively know? Is it possible that the present Vicar of Christ is not certain as to the number of his predecessors? Is he infallible in faith and fallible in fact?

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